

Message Text

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ACTION INR-10

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E.OGM 11652: GDS

TAGS: XZ, CU,UR, NPOL

SUBJ: SOVIET AND CUBAN ROLE IN AFRICA

REF: STATE 134913

1. DEPARTMENT IS AWARE OF PRESIDENT KOUNTCHES AND NIGER LEADERSHIPS STRONG CONCERN ABOUT SOVIET DESTABLIZATION EFFORTS IN AFRICA AS EXPRESSED IN ALMOST EVERY CONVERSATION I HAVE HAD WCHIEF OF STATE. SOVIET AND CUBAN ROLE, AS RE-VEALED IN ANGLIA AND TEHIOPIA, IS SEEN AS THE MOST DIVISIVE ISSUE FACING CONTINENT, THREATENING INDEPENDENCE OF AFRICAN NATIONS AND DIVERTING ATTENTION AND RESOURCES FROM ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, WHICH, IN KOUNTCHES VIEW, IS THE MAIN BUSINESS AFRICANS SHOULD BE ABOUT.

2. CUBANS ARE CONSIDERED BY NIGER AS NOTHING MORE THAN SOVIET PUPPETS WITH NO INDEPENDENT POLICY OR SPECIAL QUALIFICATIONS TO SOLVE AFRICAN PROBLEMS. AS FOREIGN MINISTER DJERMAKOYE ONCE REMARKED TO US, IT IS NAIVE TO TALK ABOUT A SEPARATE CUBAN ROLE. "ALL THEY PRODUCE IS CIGARS AND SUGAR, THERE IS NO CUBAN ABILITY TO PROJECT POWER IN AFRICA APART FROM THE SOVIET CONNECTION.

3. SOVIETS ARE SEEN BY NIGER AS EMBARKED IN A DETERMINED

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LONG TERM STRATEGIC ENTERPRISE 1) TO OUTFLANK MIDDLE EAST BY PENETRATION OF HORN AND BY SUPPORTING RADICALS LIKE QADHAFI 2) TO GET ASTRICDE CAPE OIL ROUTEDS BY UNHINGING SOUTHERN AFRICA, AND 3) TO ATTAIN EVENTUAL ACCESS TO WEALTH OF NIGERIA BY BUILDING UP CLIENT RELATIONSHIPS WITH ANY COUNTRY IN WEST AFRICA WEAK ENOUGH OR NAIVE ENOUGH TO TURN TO THEM FOR HELP. WHATEVER CRITICISMS MIGHT BE MADE OF THIS WORLD VIEW, AND

ALTHOUGH IT IS NOT ONE WHICH IS STATED PUBLICLY, IT IS FIRMLY HELD BY PRESIDENT AND HIS COLLEAGUES WHO ARE PROFOUNDLY MISTRUSTFUL OF EVERYTHING SOVIETS DO HERE OR ELSEWHERE ON THE CONTINENT.

4. DESPITE ATTACHMENT TO IDEAS OF REGIONALISM AND AFRICAN COOPERATION, KOUNTCHE BELIEVES AFRICA IS FUNDAMENTALLY WEAK AND VULNERABLE. IT LACKS POLITICAL WILL AND IS UNABLE TO COPE WITH PROBLEMS IN TERMS OF RAW POWER. AFRICANS BEING UNABLE TO STOP SOVIETS THEMSELVES, THERE MUST BE SOME EFFECTIVE COUNTER WEIGHT TO INHIBIT SOVIETS PUSHING AHEAD AT RANDOM. THIS MEANS NIGER WOULD WELCOME FIRM US AND WESTERN RESPONSES TO WHAT SOVIETS ARE NOW DOING. NIGER WOULD LIKE TO SEE SOME KIND OF STRATEGIC ACCOMMODATION UNDER WHICH AFRICA WOULD BE OFF LIMITS TO SOVIET ADVENTURISM, ARMS TRANSFERS TO UNSTABLE STATES (LIKE BENIN) OR EXPANSIONIST ONES (LIKE LIBYA) WOULD STOP, AND PROBLEMS SCALED DOWN TO SIZE WHERE AFRICANS MIGHT COPE WITH THEM VIA FAMILIAR AVENUES OF CONSULTATION AND NEGOTIATION. JAMES

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